IN MEMORIAM

Mahfoud Bennoune (1936-2004)

Mahfoud Bennoune, an anthropology professor and authority on the politics and people of Algeria, died on Monday May 17, 2004, at William Beaumont Hospital in Royal Oak, Michigan. He was 68 and divided his time between Algiers, Algeria and Berkley, Michigan. The cause of death was complications related to amyloidosis, an illness he battled since 1990.

Dr. Bennoune was a prolific writer in Arabic, French and English. In his books, speeches and articles, he explored and analyzed a wide variety of socio-economic issues as they applied to contemporary Algeria and North Africa. Among his works: "L'an 2000 du Tiers Monde" (1985); *The Making of Contemporary Algeria* (Cambridge, 1988); "Le Hasard et l'histoire: Entretiens avec Belaïd Abdesselam" (1990), with Ali El-Kenz and former Algerian Prime Minister Belaïd Abdesselam; "L'Amérique De L'Etat-Providence Au Pouvoir Neoliberal: De Roosevelt a Reagan" (1992); "Esquisse d'une anthropologie de l'Algérie politique" (1998); "Les Algériennes: Victimes d'une Société Néopatriarcale" (1999); and "Education, Culture et Développement en Algérie" (2000). He was also the author and narrator of "Building a Nation: The History of Algerian Industrialization," part of a series titled, "The Arabs," shown on BBC-TV and PBS in 1983.

Mahfoud Bennoune was born in the rural village of El Akbia, Algeria on April 9, 1936. In 1955, he joined the Algerian Army of National Liberation (ALN), which fought for freedom from France during the Algerian War of Independence. Captured on a mission in Algiers, he served five years as a prisoner of war. He lost a substantial amount of his hearing in one ear to torture, an experience of which he was reminded in his final days by news of events in Iraq. Following the Evian Accords, which ended the war, Dr. Bennoune was named a member of the ceasefire commission, and he subsequently worked with Mohammed Boudiaf to establish the Parti de la Révolution Socialiste (PRS) in Algeria.

In 1967, Dr. Bennoune moved to the United States where, despite the lack of a high school diploma, he enrolled at Wayne State University in Detroit, obtaining his bachelor's and master's degrees in anthropology. In 1976, he earned a doctorate in anthropology from the University of Michigan. From 1975-77, he worked as a professor at Stockton State College in New Jersey and from 1981 until his 1993 retirement he served as a faculty member at the University of Algiers.

In 1993, he was condemned to death by Algeria's fundamentalist armed groups, whose agenda he strongly opposed, even while remaining a critic of the government they battled. Despite the threats, he continued to champion secularism, tolerance, women's rights and human rights. He was committed to ending terrorism, and he believed that this could only be done by addressing its root causes.

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Dr. Bennoune was a participant in the Africa Peace Tour, a member of the Conseil Consultatif National, the Commission Nationale de la Reforme du Système Educatif and a conferee of Algeria's Medaille de Merite Nationale.

His survivors include daughter Karima and son Kamal.

As he greatly valued education, the Mahfoud Bennoune Endowment Fund has been created in his memory at the University of Michigan to reward outstanding student theses on North Africa. Donations may be sent to Mahfoud Bennoune Endowment Fund, University of Michigan, In Care of LSA Development, 524 S. Main Street, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48104-2921.

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